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ABSTRACT

Faced with growing problems in the management and direction of its periodical collection, in 1973 the McLaughlin Library at the University of Guelph established a Periodical Use Committee responsible for collecting and analyzing statistics on the use of periodicals within the library. Specific responsibilities of the committee included deciding how long a period should be surveyed, how often to survey within the period, what to survey, how to record the results, and how to train the staff. A survey period of 1 year was chosen and 61 days were surveyed during the period September 1973 to August 1974. Usage recorded on a survey day was confined to material picked up or returned to a division that day. Data recorded included which titles were used and how usage varied by date. The final periodical use report for the survey period is presented in this report. While the data presented in no way suggests total use of a particular periodical, it is valid for comparative purposes and may have implications for preparing or justifying future periodical budgets, or in making decisions about the development of the University of Guelph Library periodical collection. (THC)

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A Report of the periodical use study conducted at the University of Guelph Library from September 1973 to August 1974

Nancy Brown and Yong-Ja Cho

January 1975

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INTRODUCTION

The McLaughlin Library, University of Guelph, in common with other university libraries, is faced with growing problems in the management and direction of its periodical* collection. The increasing number of periodical titles that warrant consideration for addition to the collection, the rapidly escalating costs of subscriptions held and, finally, the shelf space requirements constitute serious problems. Difficulties notwithstanding, periodicals are basic to the service provided by a university library.

Early in 1973 it was recognized that a resolution of the 'periodical question' must be made and a Periodical Use Committee was established by the Chief Librarian. This committee was responsible for the collection and analysis of statistics on the use of periodicals within the library.

The methodology for the collection of the data was directly related to the organization of the Library. At Guelph, the Library is organized by subject divisions. In each of the six subject divisions, monographs, periodicals and reference materials, whether hard copy or microfilm, are shelved in open stacks by Library of Congress call number. Periodicals do not circulate and the use takes place within the Library. In each of the Divisions, carrel and study space is immediately adjacent to the stacks.

The shelving and shelf maintenance of the collection housed within each Division is the responsibility of that Division. Student pages and Library clerical staff regularly tour the Division and pick up books, periodicals, microforms, government documents, maps, etc., which have been used and left in carrels, on study tables, on the floor, or on special

* In this report, the term periodical is defined as a publication of more than annual frequency.

shelving designated for this purpose. This material, along with books returned from circulation, is sorted for re-shelving. Each Division has a book sorting area or 'book station' on the floor. Student pages or clerical staff work in the book station, unloading the incoming book trucks, sorting and reloading the trucks for shelving. Sorting proceeds first by type - books, unbound periodicals, bound periodicals - and within that by call number.

METHODOLOGY

The Periodical Use Committee was chaired by the Associate Librarian and membership included Division Heads, Head of the Serials Department and Head of the Systems and Data Processing Department. The Head of the Serials Department acted as a co-ordinator and day-to-day liaison between the Divisions and the Systems and Data Processing Department. After the Committee decided to proceed with a survey of periodical use, its specific responsibilities included deciding how long a period should be surveyed, how often to survey within that period, what to survey, how to record the results, and how to train the staff.

A survey period of one year was chosen. This would ensure that the data would not be biased to any semester or between-semester period. It should be noted that the University of Guelph operates on a trimester system and thus has three peak periods of use each year.

During the survey period it would have been optimum to survey each day. This was not feasible because of staff time considerations. The survey day schedule that evolved had as its object surveying each day of the week an equal number of times. The underlying assumption was that 'Friday-use'

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is not equal to 'Wednesday-use'. Weekends were considered a unit; that is, Saturday and Sunday constituted one survey day. The schedule accepted by the committee was to survey every fifth day, backing the survey day through the week; for example:

September 1973 -

Wednesday	September 5
Tuesday	September 11
Monday	September 17
Saturday & Sunday	September 22 & 23
Friday	September 28

With some modifications being introduced over the Christmas period, 61 days were surveyed during the period September, 1973 to August 1974.

Usage recorded on a survey day was confined to material picked up or returned to the Division that day. The day before a survey day the support staff would ensure that all periodicals were picked up and shelved so that no extra material could invalidate the sample day. On survey day all periodicals used and picked up, or otherwise returned to a division (for example from photocopy, interlibrary loan, etc.), were surveyed and dispatched for shelving.

Firm decisions were required on what to survey. The general guideline of 'any periodical used' raised a multiplicity of queries. It was decided that reference periodicals were not to be surveyed, but periodicals returned to a division from the Central Photocopy Office were to be included. A bound

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volume or a roll of microfilm covering several years (Vol. 6-9, 1955-58) was recorded in the survey using the latest year shown on the item. It was important for the support staff to clearly understand the distinction between a periodical use survey and a shelving workload survey. It was incumbent upon the supervisor in the book station to be aware of where loaded trucks came from - for example binding versus pick-up; the former was not included in the survey, the latter was.

The recording of the data was a function of the output sought - which titles were used and how usage varied with date. The procedure was as follows:

1. The Head of the Serials Department requested from the Systems and Data Processing Department a print-out of periodical holdings by Division. That is to say, each Division received a print-out, in call number order, of the periodicals held in that Division. For the Science Division the call number range was Q, RC321-576, S (except SF600-1100) and T, including duplicates. These print-outs were known as Data Collection Lists. The format is shown in Figure 1. The date break-down was arbitrary; it was designed to show usage by date over common time spans - pre war, last 2 years, last 5 years, last 10 years etc.

2. The total survey period was divided into segments of approximately seven weeks each. This permitted new titles to be added to the Data Collection Lists. The Serials Department had these Data Collection Lists bound and sent to the Divisions. Affixed to the front of each list was a large notice showing Batch number (Batch #1 was the first of the seven week segments, Batch #2 the second, etc.) and date of first survey day and last survey day in the seven week period. The Serials Department provided the

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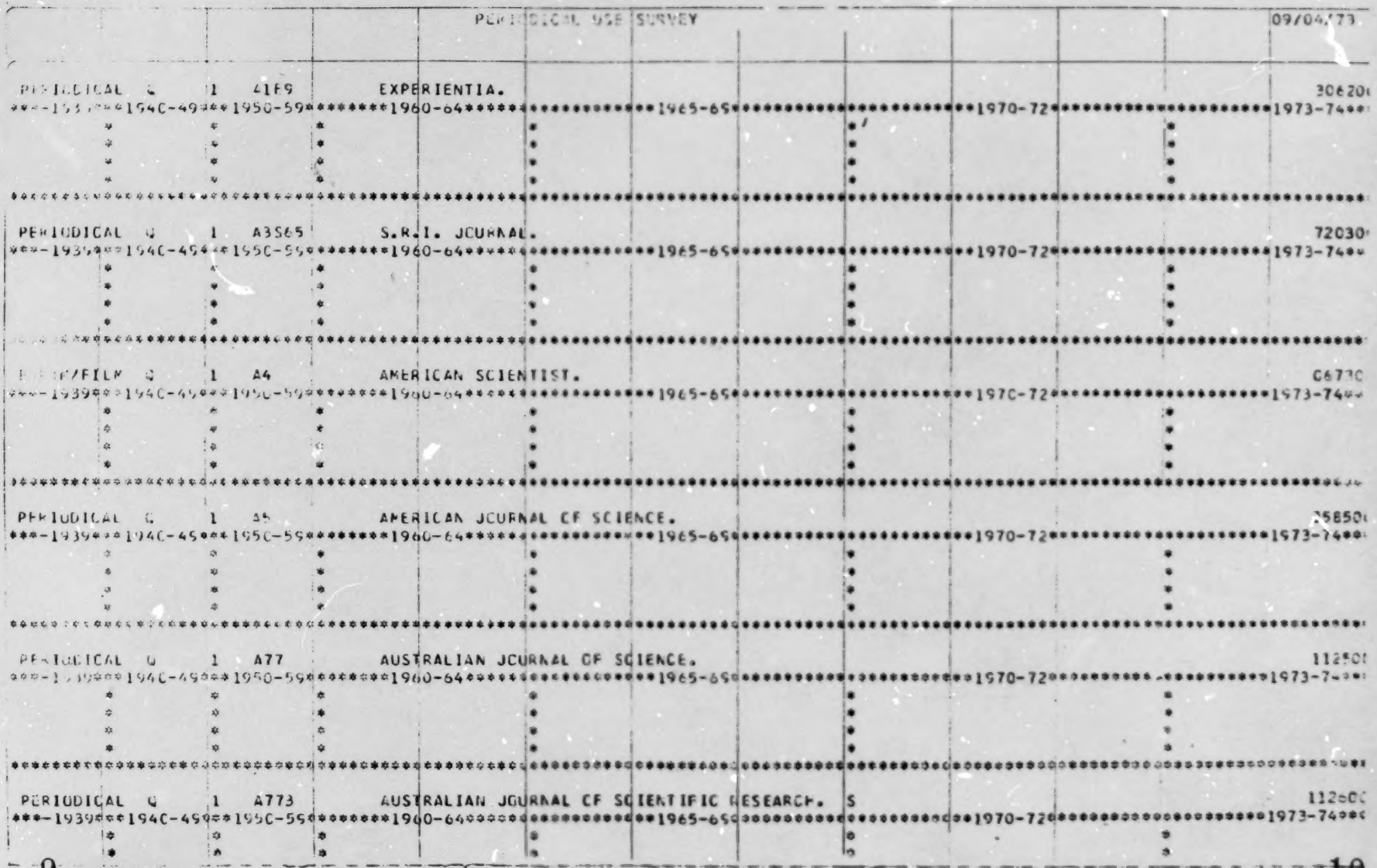

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Figure 1
Format of the Data Collection List.

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Divisions with a supply of slips (Figure 2) to be inserted, if a new title appeared or the space to record usage was filled. The Divisions wrote in the Serial Identification Number (from the automated serials system), periodical title and call number and stapled the slip to the appropriate place in the Data Collection List. A new listing approximately every seven weeks kept this procedure to a minimum.

Figure 2

Attachments used to record new titles

3. The actual recording of the data was the simplest part of the operation. Periodicals to be surveyed were unloaded from trucks onto shelves in the book sorting area and put in call number order. One person would call out the call number and year for each item and a second person would mark the Data Collection List (see Figure 3). To illustrate, the Journal of Animal Science for the years 1950-59 was re-shelved 3 times, for the years 1960-64, 3 times, for the years 1970-72, 2 times and for the year 1973, 4 times. This usage was recorded during the period September 5 to October 22, 1973.

4. At the end of each seven week segment each Data Collection List was 'closed' for recording.

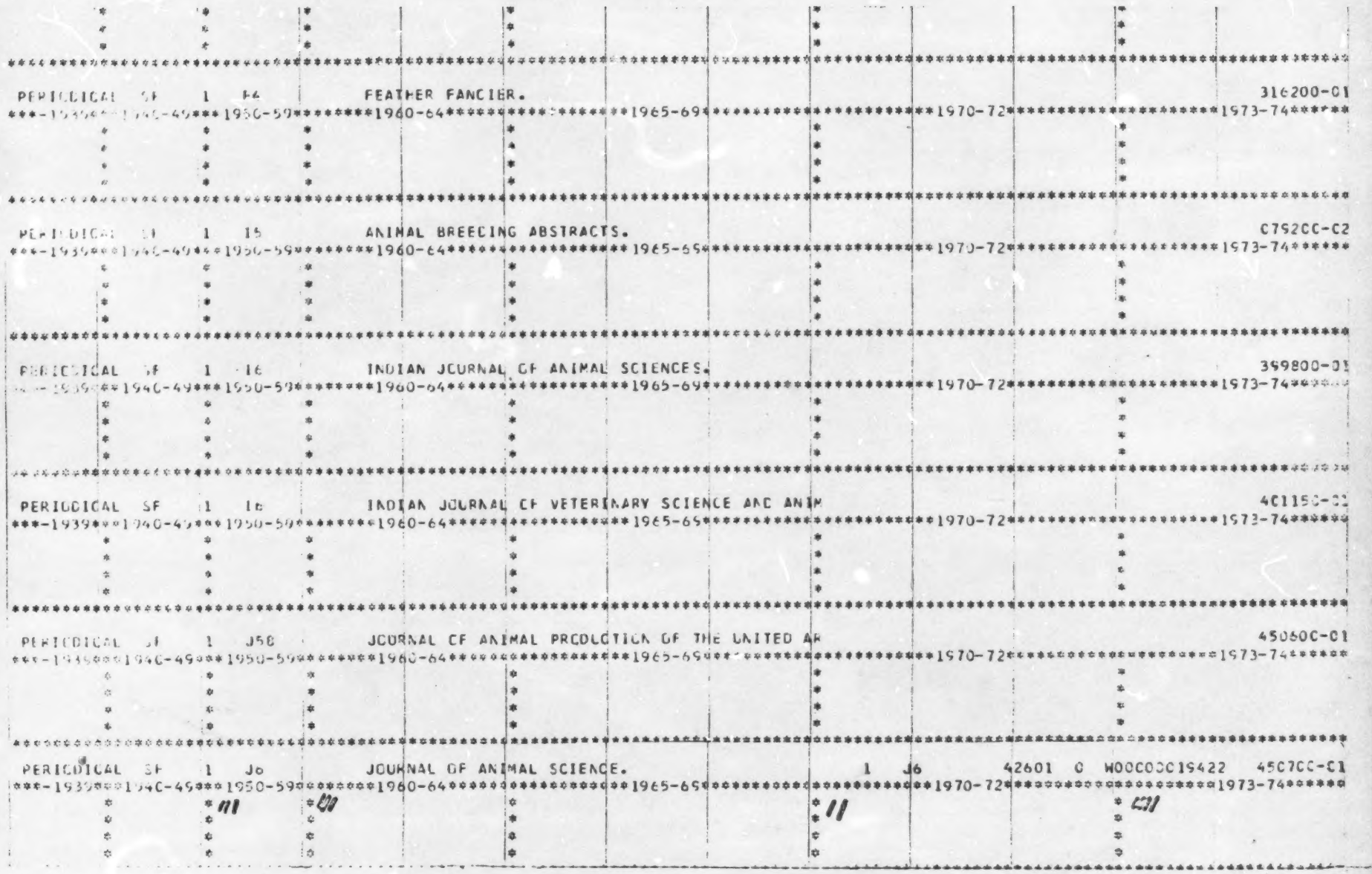

Figure 3
Data Collection List for the period September 5 - October 22, 1973.

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The clerical supervisor in the book station played a key role in the survey. The Periodical Use Committee made decisions about what to survey and these decisions were communicated by the Division Head to all staff in each Division, with the Division Head and clerical supervisor carefully discussing each category. When the book station staff encountered a problem, for example - is a magafile of unbound issues considered as a bound volume or as 20 separate issues - it would be taken to the Periodical Use Committee for a ruling. Very often the clerical supervisors in each Division would attend Committee meetings since constant communication was vital. The clerical supervisor also was responsible for training support staff who were regularly involved in the pick-up and shelving functions, and the special student pages who provided week-end and back up service for the survey.

After a Data Collection List was 'closed', the next step was to transfer the information from that list onto 'Optical Mark Recognition' or OMR cards. Division staff were already familiar with OMR cards from other surveys and as a format they were acceptable as input by the Systems and Data Processing Department.

Transferring the data from the Data Collection Lists to the OMR cards was another responsibility of the clerical supervisor. (Normally the interaction for this phase was directly between the Head of the Serials Department and the clerical supervisors.) The Head of the Serials Department circulated precise written instructions for encoding OMR cards. The information encoded was: Serial Identification Number (from the automated serials system), copy number, and number of usages recorded in each time span (see Figure 3). This information was coded directly from the Data Collection List. When the data had been encoded, the OMR cards, keeping the same

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sequence as the Data Collection List and identified by Division and Batch number, were sent to the Serials Department for forwarding to the Systems and Data Processing Department.

Initial output consisted of an edit sheet. These sheets along with the OMR cards, still in Data Collection List order, were returned to the Divisions for checking. The edit sheets were verified by checking against the original Data Collection List. If an error was discovered, the data was deleted, input correctly and a second edit sheet was run and checked. When the data was all input correctly a use report was run for each Division (Figure 4). These reports were in alphabetic order by Division. Figure 4 shows the use each title received in the period September 5 to October 22, 1973. Titles which received no use did not appear on the list. At the end of each seven week collection period a cumulated use report was run. This meant that at any time during the survey the latest use report showed the use to-date since the beginning of the survey in September 1973.

Figure 5 illustrates the final periodical use report for the survey period September 1973 - August 1974. As an example, the Journal of Animal Science had a total recorded usage of 186, on survey days. In other words, on the days surveyed, the Journal of Animal Science was picked up or otherwise returned to the Science Division a total of 186 times. It is very interesting to note the dates used - in the pre 1939 period, 1 usage was recorded; 1940-1949, 9 usages; 1950-1959, 22 usages; 1960-1964, 18 usages; 1965-1969, 35 usages; 1970-1972, 46 usages; and 1973-1974, 55 usages.

PERIODICAL USE SURVEY FOURTH FLOOR 11/07/73

				SIN NO.	/39	/49	/59	/64	/69	/72	/74	TOTL
[illegible] OF ANIMAL ECOLOGY.												
QL 750	J65		V.1, 1932-	450500-01	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	6
[illegible] OF ANIMAL SCIENCE.												
S 1	A6		V.1, 1942- INDEX V.1-24.	450700-01	0	0	3	3	0	2	4	12
[illegible] OF APPLIED BACTERIOLOGY.												
QR 1	A6		V.16, 1953-	451000-01	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF APPLIED CHEMISTRY & BIOTECHNO												
TP 1	J612		V.21, 1971-	451400-01	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF APPLIED ECOLOGY.												
S 3	J87		V.1, 1964-	451600-01	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY.												
QP 1	J72		V.4, 1953/54-	452200-01	0	0	1	5	4	6	3	19
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF APPLIED POLYMER SCIENCE.												
TP 156	P6J6		V.(1), 1959; V.12, 1967-	452300-01	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF [illegible]												
QR 1	[illegible]		V.2, [illegible] 1-	453200-01	0	3	4	0	1	2	3	13
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF BIOCHEMISTRY.												
QP 501	J67		V.25, 1966-	453600-01	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
[illegible] OF [illegible] CHEMISTRY.												
QP 1	J7		V.1, 1936- INDEX: V.1-150. M/FILM: V.10-24, (2)	453800-01	0	10	7	3	4	6	0	26
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF BIOPHYSICAL AND BIOCHEMICAL C												
QH 301	J677		V.1, 1955-V.12, 1961.	454200-01	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF CELL BIOLOGY.												
QH 581	J677		V.12, 1962- INDEX V.12-31.	455200-01	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	4

Figure 4

Use report for the period September 5 - October 22, 1973

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PERIODICAL USE SURVEY SCIENCE DIVISION CUMULATIVE 02/13/75

	SIN NO.	/39	/49	/59	/64	/69	/72	/74	TOTL
FOREST SCIENCE:#A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF R F655	330700-01						9	7	16
FORESTRY CHRONICLE. F66	331100-01					3	2	5	10
JOURNAL OF FORESTRY. J63	465400-01			2	3	5	6	6	22
FORESTRY. F67	330900-01					1	1	2	4
TIMBER OF CANADA. T57	796600-01								
TREES MAGAZINE. T7	806500-01								
CANADIAN JOURNAL OF FOREST RESEARCH. C35	184050-01						1	2	3
ANIMAL PRODUCTION:#JOURNAL OF THE BRITIS A55	079500-01				7	8	18	19	52
ARCHIVOS DE ZOOTECNIA. A74	096475-01								
CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ANIMAL SCIENCE. C2	182700-01		2	3	10	7	22	18	62
FEATHER FANCIER. F4	316200-01								
INDIAN JOURNAL OF ANIMAL SCIENCES. I6	399800-01						3		3
INDIAN JOURNAL OF VETERINARY SCIENCE AND I6	401150-01								
JOURNAL OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION OF THE UNIT J58	450600-01						1		1
JOURNAL OF ANIMAL SCIENCE. J6	450700-01	1	9	24	18	35	46	55	188
WORLD REVIEW OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION.									

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Figure 5
Final periodical use report for the survey period September 1973 - August 1974.

CONCLUSION

In this period of escalating periodical costs and restricted budgets, it is essential that an academic library be able to justify its expenditures. A measure of periodical use would appear to be an indispensable factor in any judgement which may be necessary with regard to serial expenditures.

As described above, the University of Guelph Library staff has developed a method of measuring such use without forcing an undue burden - or cost - upon the library staff or budget. A sampling technique has made it possible to collect sufficient data for periodical use analyses. This data, although in no way suggesting total use of a particular periodical, is valid for comparative purposes, since all periodicals were given the same treatment. The resulting analyses will be invaluable in preparing or justifying future periodical budgets or in making decisions about the rationalization of the University of Guelph Library periodical collection.

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